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## **THE MINISTER**

H.E. Mr. Eugène-Richard Gasana  
President of the UN Security Council  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the UN

1 April 2013

Your Excellency,

On 22 March 2013, the Government of the Republic of Somaliland had the honour to welcome to Hargeisa the UN's Technical Assessment Mission (TAM), which was mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2093 (2013) to consider the implementation of a new UN Mission in the region. I wish to summarize for the benefit of the members of the Security Council the points that my government raised with the UN team.

The past year has been a critical one for the transition in Somalia. My government hopes that under the new leadership that has taken shape in Somalia, our neighbours will see a return to effective governance, and the re-establishment of peace and stability. At the same time, we urge the international community to continue to support my country, Somaliland, which remains a bulwark of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. As a flourishing democracy that has engaged in an extensive process of national reconciliation, we also believe that our experience can be of value to our neighbors as they embark on critical state building and peacebuilding tasks.

To ensure that the UN's future engagement in the region is both effective and efficient, it must be guided by the reality that Somaliland is separate from Somalia and has followed a quite different course during the past 21 years since our people re-asserted the independence that we achieved from the United Kingdom in 1960 as part of the decolonization process. Any UN presence in Somaliland must therefore have specifically tailored priorities and strategies, and must make its decisions regarding our development partnership without prejudice to the politics or interests of the federated regions of Somalia. The UN must respect its stated guiding principle of "do no harm" and make sure that none of its interventions in Somaliland and Somalia undermine the capacity of the Somaliland government to function in the service of the citizens who have democratically endorsed its authority.

In this regard, while we welcome the TAM's assurances of a robust UN presence in Hargeisa headed by a senior official, we believe it would be wrong for the UN's presence in Somaliland to be subsumed under a management structure based in Mogadishu, as is apparently being proposed. The government in Mogadishu is not in a position to advise the UN on Somaliland's development needs and priorities—any UN activities should therefore be managed from Somaliland by the permanent team already envisioned for our country. Not only would this allow Somaliland to benefit directly from the UN's expertise, it would also enable more UN staff to experience at first-hand Somaliland's effective approach to peace-building and democracy— knowledge that is also integral to building sustainable governance in neighbouring Somalia. I would add that my government's ability to protect the security and safety of our citizens and international visitors, including UN staff, is well established.



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At the London Conference on Somalia in February 2012, the participants recognized the need for the international community to support a dialogue between Somaliland and the TFG or its successor in order to clarify their future relations. That decision was endorsed by the Istanbul II Conference on 1 June 2012. A first, historic round of talks took place at Chevening House in the UK later that month, and President Silanyo subsequently met President Sheikh Sharif in Dubai on 28 June to ratify what was agreed.

My government believes strongly that this dialogue should resume as soon as practicable and should retain its unique character as a process conducted between governments. The dialogue is very important for the future stability of the Horn of Africa and the wellbeing of its people. In the longer term, it offers the prospect of Somaliland and Somalia reaching agreement about Somaliland's status. But in the near term, the dialogue is an opportunity for us to talk to Somalia about issues of practical concern, such as cooperation on terrorism, piracy, extremism, serious crime, illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste at sea, as well as a wide range of economic issues, the resolution of which will benefit both our peoples. We call on the UN, and the wider international community to support the early resumption of the dialogue.

I wish to reiterate, however, that given our people's decision to re-assert our independence in 1991, it is unacceptable to Somaliland that the new draft Somalia constitution purports to lay claim to our territory. Somaliland emphatically rejects any such claim. For the same reason, we oppose, and will not recognize, any attempt by the Government of Somalia to declare an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which purports to include the waters adjacent to the coast of Somaliland. The Government of Somaliland reserves the right to declare and enforce its own 200-nautical mile EEZ, and to exercise jurisdiction and sovereign rights within the EEZ in accordance with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Meanwhile, I can confirm that Somaliland will continue to play a significant role in the international community's efforts to maintain peace and security on the Horn of Africa. As an independent and integral force in the fight against piracy, Somaliland will continue to work with UNODC, the EU and the International Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to develop institutions and policing capabilities for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of acts of piracy up to international standards of human rights. To this end, Somaliland has concluded a bilateral agreement with the Government of the Seychelles over the transfer of convicted pirate prisoners, and changed its own laws to allow it to receive such prisoners. In addition, Somaliland cooperates directly and works jointly with the Governments of the US, UK and Ethiopia, amongst others, in the fight against terrorism, and on the promotion of regional stability. The rapidly changing political dynamics of the region will only increase the burden faced by the Somaliland government in these areas in the near term, meaning that continued international support for safeguarding and strengthening government in Somaliland should remain the objective of the UN and the broader international community.



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The Somaliland people are grateful for the contribution made by the UN and donor governments to humanitarian and development assistance in our country over the years. We will continue to contribute to international efforts to build a more peaceful Horn of Africa, including by cooperating with the new Government in Somalia in areas of mutual concern. Such positive engagement will only succeed if the UN and the wider international community acknowledge our unique status and help us to consolidate our achievements. The original Somali state failed because it ignored the interests and wishes of all of its peoples. It would not be in anyone's interests, including those of the government in Mogadishu, to repeat the errors of the past by repudiating the reality of Somaliland's unique status and the reality on the ground, which would only serve to lessen the chances of establishing peace and stability across our region.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr Mohamed A Omar  
Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation  
Republic of Somaliland